

## **Attachment 4**

### **Summary VCU's Response to Issues raised by Oregon Hill Representatives**

VCU is committed to involving the four neighborhood organizations by inviting them to participate in the project development and design. The St Andrews Association and Better Housing Coalition, the owner and land lease holder of the Grace Arents property immediately to the south of the proposed addition, both have publicly endorsed the project, and TK Somonath, Executive Director of Better Housing Coalition, spoke in favor of the project at the VCU Board of Visitor's public meeting when it approved the adjusting of our Master Plan boundary line to include the 911 Green Alley property.

The Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association and the Oregon Hill Home Improvement Council are the only entities that have expressed opposition to the project. Their stated position, paraphrased, has been, "...while we recognized the need for VCU to expand the recreation facilities, build it any place but here." The stated major reasons for their opposition, and our responses, are as follows:

- A. Objection to the demolition of the 911 Green Alley. To address this issue, VCU has agreed to save and move the building.
- B. Objection to the exterior design of the building. To address this issue, VCU has redesigned the exterior to make it more friendly to the neighborhood. VCU met with the City to show them the revised design, and an email received from Rachel Flynn, Director, DCD, after meeting with her and her staff on the revised design, said the following..."Also, kudos to you and your team for the design revisions and the initiative to relocate the building. We really appreciate the positive responses and "good faith effort" you all have made. It will be a building you all will be proud of."
- C. Request that VCU meet the Secretary of Interior Guidelines for Renovation. To address this issue, VCU has agreed to work with DHR to achieve a rehabilitative treatment plan that is consistent with the guidelines.
- D. Objection to the closing of Green Alley. VCU has addressed this issue by agreeing to create a new alleyway about 50 yards to the south. VCU will also commemorate the alley on the interior of the new building, as the major east-west corridor will be on the same axis and location as Green Alley.
- E. Objection to parking. This project will not increase the enrollment at VCU, and therefore does not increase campus parking requirements. Per guidelines established by BCOM, VCU exceed by over 1000 spaces the required parking for the Monroe Park Campus.

To assist VCU in ensuring that the University keep the neighborhood organizations involved, Rachel Flynn (Richmond DCD) has volunteered to act as an intermediary for

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VCU with the neighborhood groups, and City Councilman Marty Jewell, (5 District including Oregon Hill) has offered to bring all parties together, which is anticipated to occur in mid-September.

In summary, VCU believes this is an exceptionally important project to the students, faculty and staff of the University. VCU is a neighborhood of Richmond, in fact, the largest neighborhood. VCU is a land-locked University, the largest in the Commonwealth, desperately in need of additional recreation space. VCU has stated, the location of this facility was chosen because, with the exception of the single 911 Green Alley property, it is all on land owned by the University for up to 25 years, it is adjacent to the University's only outdoor recreational field, and will also result in the renovation of the important Cary Street Gym (formerly the City Auditorium).